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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAKU 001836

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TAGS: MNUC PARM PREL KNNP IR RS AM AJ

SUBJECT: PSI DEMARCHE DELIVERED TO DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
ARAZ AZIMOV

REF: STATE 190125

Classified By: Ambassador Anne Derse for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶11. (U) This is an action request; see para 9.

¶12. (C) Summary. In response to the Ambassador's and Polish Ambassador Krajewski's joint PSI demarche (reftel), Deputy Foreign Minister Azimov said the GOAJ politically and morally supports PSI, but it has not officially agreed to the Statement of Interdiction Principles (SOIP). Azimov requested that the USG send an expert-level team to Azerbaijan to further discuss the SOIP commitments and their relationship to Azerbaijan's participation in other non-proliferation programs. Azimov cautioned that Azerbaijan's complex relations with Armenia, Russia, and Iran could limit Baku's participation in the program -- particularly as Russia seeks to hijack regional cooperation programs to increase its influence in the former Soviet states. Azimov said that "a (PSI) program can be developed, but it must be extremely bilateral." End Summary

GOAJ Wants to Learn More about SOIP

¶13. (C) On December 8, the Ambassador and Polish Ambassador Krzysztof Krajewski delivered reftel PSI demarche to Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov. Azimov said the GOAJ politically and morally supports PSI. The GOAJ has not, however, officially agreed to the Statement of Interdiction Principles (SOIP). He said the GOAJ hopes to endorse the SOIP, but Baku needs to have a clearer understanding of the precise commitments entailed by the SOIP.

¶14. (C) Azimov requested that the USG send an expert-level team to Azerbaijan to further discuss these commitments and ways to leverage synergies between other proliferation programs that Azerbaijan participates in and PSI. Azimov said that after these expert-level discussions, the GOAJ will decide whether to agree to the SOIP. He cautioned that the GOAJ is cautious about making any commitments it cannot keep. Noting that the State Department had previously had a video teleconference with GOAJ experts on the PSI, Azimov said this discussion was "useful" and the "process should be continued."

Need for "Better Coordination and Synergy"

¶15. (C) Azimov remarked that there is strong bilateral cooperation in the area of non-proliferation. He said there needs to be "better coordination and synergy" between the various bilateral programs related to proliferation threats.

He noted that an expert-level team from the USG could lay the groundwork for examining all issues related to non-proliferation and the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program and how SOIP would fit under the larger umbrella of bilateral cooperation on proliferation concerns.

PSI Needs to Focus on Bilateral Cooperation

¶ 6. (C) Azimov cautioned that Azerbaijan's complex relations with Armenia, Russia, and Iran could limit the GOAJ's ability to participate in the program. Azimov raised several examples of past Western attempts to promote regional cooperation that failed because of conflicting interests among the regional countries. Azimov said that an EXBS-sponsored initiative from the 1990s failed because the regional countries had little incentive to share information.

Similarly, NATO's South Caucasus clearing house never worked because of the regional states' unwillingness to share information. Azimov said that Azerbaijan will "not sit around the same table and share information," arguing that Armenia occupies Azerbaijani territory and will also share information with Moscow and possibly Tehran. Azimov remarked that Kazakhstan is a potential exception and that Azerbaijan may be able to partner with Kazakhstan in some regional initiatives.

¶ 7. (C) Azimov also argued that Moscow seeks to hijack USG efforts to promote noble goals in a regional context. Azimov said that Russia seeks to use the guise of regional cooperation forums to extend its influence over the former Soviet space. For example, Russia has promoted CASFOR as an attempt to counter the threats of terrorism, proliferation, and narcotics trafficking on the Caspian Sea. CASFOR is a

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foil to USG attempts to address these security issues, according to Azimov. Given this dynamic, Azimov said that Azerbaijan is cautious about joining a regional initiative -- such as PSI -- that Russia could subsequently use to expand its influence over Azerbaijan. Speaking on a potential PSI program with Azerbaijan, Azimov said that "a program can be developed, but it must be extremely bilateral." He also noted that Baku may be limited in its ability to publicly support the SOIP.

¶ 8. (C) Azimov said that US-GOAJ cooperation on PSI should focus on identifying gaps in Azerbaijan's ability to address proliferation concerns, and secondly, to focus US assistance on "national capacity building" -- Azerbaijan's ability to deal with proliferation threats.

Krajewski Doubts Azimov

¶ 9. (C) After delivering the demarche, Krajewski privately told poloff that "we now know where opposition to PSI is coming from": Azimov. Krajewski judged that Azimov's comments were intended as a stalling mechanism and he was unlikely to endorse SOIP. Krajewski also noted that he thought Foreign Minister Mammadyarov would likely favor PSI.

Comment and Action Request

¶ 10. (C) Despite Krajewski's observation, we endorse Azimov's request for another round of expert-level discussions on PSI. The GOAJ is an excellent partner on nonproliferation and has worked quietly and steadily to achieve mutual goals through our EXBS and CTR programs. Consultations that focus on how to better coordinate and develop synergies between our existing areas of bilateral nonproliferation cooperation and the PSI SOIP could clarify matters for Azimov, who is the key GOAJ decision-maker on this issue.